

number should not exceed six—agree to meet for an hour once a week for eight weeks to study a missionary book. The book is written specially for the purpose, and no trouble is spared to make it as perfect as possible. The text-book for this year is "The Desire of India," by Dr. Surendra Kumar Datta, who, needless to say, is able to write of his own personal knowledge of India's needs. One chapter is read each week, and the leader of the Circle gives one question to each member to be answered as fully as possible by the next meeting.

The leader's work is certainly difficult if the Circle is to be a success, but very full helps for leaders are published by the Council. The members of Circles may, and probably will, come very unwillingly, and in a spirit hostile to missions. This does not matter at all; discussion is thereby promoted, and knowledge of facts can be counted on to rouse more enthusiasm than hours of talk.

The "Desire of India" (price 2s.), also the "Helps for Leaders" (price 6d.), can be obtained at the office, 100, Prince's Street, Edinburgh, and I shall be delighted to give further information to anyone who cares to write to me. Present students will be interested to know that I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Brown at the Summer Camp.

In conclusion, I would say, if a Circle appears impossible, read the book for pleasure, one chapter at a time, it will repay the effort. The work abroad is chiefly held back, not by want of money, not by lack of men, but by the ignorance of people at home.

E. S. MENCE.

COROT.

AFTER six months spent with the Italian painters, we have this term a very different subject for our picture talks. A greater contrast than that of Botticelli and Titian with Corot would be hard to find. The world has moved away from the days of the Italian Renaissance, and Corot's pictures show us how men's minds have changed with the times. With the old masters we found religion the ruling thought which underlay their art—the desire to teach preceding the desire to please. With Corot all is changed; he worships the goddess Nature, and all else fades to nothingness before her charms. We leave behind all emotion and passion; here all is peace, and we feel something of the serenity and quiet joy which marked the life of the painter.

Corot was born in Paris in 1796. His boyhood was passed in obscurity, and he seems to have shown no signs of genius. On leaving school, the young man became apprenticed to a draper, whom he served for eight long and uneventful years, following conscientiously, if without enthusiasm, the calling chosen for him by his parents. Corot might have lived and died a draper, had not the consciousness one day flashed upon him that his employer required him to deceive and outwit his customer. His trade, always distasteful, now became unbearable, and he determined, in spite of opposition, to leave the shop. So the world lost a draper to gain an artist.

From henceforth Corot was absorbed in his art, and all the restlessness of the days in which he lived and the convulsions which shook France passed by him unheeded. Corot showed himself to all gentle, kind, and generous even to a fault, but perhaps the keynote of his life was an intense love of nature, which he studied with patience and reverence. His works speak for him as nothing else could do. He was no

worshipper of Nature in her wild and romantic moods; no need for him to search for subjects for his brush; to him each stone and flower, each village pool was beautiful. The little pond at Ville d'Avray is the theme for many of his pictures. Corot chooses an early dawn or an autumnal sunset. A soft haze envelops the scene and a grey-greenish tint pervades the whole. If a figure is introduced into the scene, it is to complete the harmony of the landscape, and has no interest of its own, for Corot was no student of human nature. Corot loved his pictures as if they had been his children, and was always loth to part with them; but he expected little praise from the world, and when fame came to him he received it with humble and grateful surprise.

The following extract from a letter written by Corot to a personal friend shows us what Corot loved to paint: "Do you see, it is charming, the day of a landscapist. One rises early, at three o'clock, before the sun rises; one goes and sits at the foot of a tree. Nature resembles a white tablecloth, everything is scented, everything trembles with the fresh breeze of the dawn. Bing! the sun is clear; the little flowers seem to awake joyously, the leaves shiver in the morning breeze, in the trees the invisible birds are chirping. Bam! bam! The sun has risen, the peasant is passing the end of the field with his cart harnessed with two bulls. Ding! ding! the tinkling bell of the leader of a flock of sheep, the flowers hold up their heads, the birds fly hither and thither; it is adorable. Boum! boum! it is midday; the full sun burns the earth, everything is heavy, everything becomes grave; let us go indoors. Bam! bam! the sun descends towards the horizon; it is time to return to work. Nature has a tired look. Poor flowers, they are not like us men, who grumble at everything! They have patience. By-and-by, they say, we shall have what we want; they are thirsty, they wait. The sun has disappeared, twilight commences—heavens, how charming!—everything is vague and Nature grows drowsy, the fresh air sighs among the leaves, the birds say their

evening prayer, the dew scatters pearls among the grass, the nymphs wish to be unseen—Bing! a star; bing! bing! a second star. Bing! bing! three, six, twenty stars—there is my picture complete."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR EDITOR,—

At one of our Association meetings it was proposed that students should prepare criticism lessons for publication in the *Pianta*, and that in a subsequent number these lessons should be criticised. This plan does not appeal to me as really practical, for this reason—by the time the criticisms were published the term's work would be done, and one of the chief uses of the lessons would be minimised.

The most inspiring papers we have from time to time on the pictures for the term show us, I think, what we really need—a broad *resumé* on some subject, or a part of it, with list of books of reference on the subject. Many of us have the use of really good libraries, and do not perhaps realise the position of others who are dependent on their own effort both in selecting and obtaining books. I should like to call the attention of students to a letter reprinted from this month's *Commonwealth*, as it may be of interest to those who at our next Conference hope to discuss the possibility of including in our work some voluntary effort to benefit those children who by reason of circumstances do not share the advantages of Parents' Union children.—Yours sincerely,

HARRIET SMEETON.

The following letter is reprinted from the organ of the Christian Social Union, *The Commonwealth*, by request, as a suggestion for a possible extension of work on the lines of the "Sunbeam Mission," which so many children have now taken up.

DEAR EDITOR,—

A very real problem presents itself to many priests in large and poor parishes or mission districts for which perhaps your readers might find a solution. Children and infants are presented for baptism, generally by the mother only, with no father present, and often with no god-parents provided.

Of many such there is no reasonable hope or expectation that they will be taught "The Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed," or anything else which they "ought to know and believe for their soul's health."

It is impossible for one man in charge of thousands—one knows of cases where it is anything from three to ten thousand—to supervise the Christian upbringing of those thus entered on the roll of Christians. By the time they have reached school age they may have moved, or have been lost sight of in an hundred and one divers ways.

What, then, is the priest to do? To refuse to baptise where there is no expectation of a reasonable development of Christian life is an impossible and uncanonical distrust of God and man; to baptise and leave the rest to Providence is neglecting the wise precautions made by our rubrics and the custom of the Universal Church, which recognises each child to have responsible sponsors. The only solution seems to be a voluntary band of god-parents who would undertake the care of such cases, and prove real and ideal "fairy god-mothers and god-fathers" to Christ's forlorn little ones, that none of them should needlessly perish.

In the republic of Venice, in its palmy days, it was the custom for all the babies of the "Grandi" of noble birth to have sponsors drawn from the populace; for as, according to the Roman Church, such relationship counted like the ties of blood, all future matrimonial complications or hindrances to inter-marriages between great houses were avoided. Might it not be possible in these days of a growing sense of social oneness and mutual responsibility to reverse

the process—for a parish of educated people of more or less leisure to offer themselves as god-parents to the children in parishes where the parents have neither the time nor the opportunity nor the knowledge to bring up their children in the fear of God? Whether or no these responsibilities should extend further than religious care and instruction is a doubtful point. The very last consideration which one would wish to introduce is that of "charity" as it is commonly understood—a lively hope of favours to come on our side, and a sense of monetary responsibility on the other, would destroy the more spiritual and social sides of the tie; and yet no one would wish to restrict the active benevolence which would apprentice a god-son or train a god-daughter.

In imagination one sees St. Peter's, Eaton Square, adopting some parish in the East India Dock Road, to give concrete examples.

What experiences have others of this difficulty, and have they already in practice solved it far more satisfactorily? In the hope of enlightenment,—Yours truly,

P.

DEAR MISS PARISH AND DEAR STUDENTS,—

When your handsome gift arrived, I knew you would all be scattered, and not likely to pass on a letter from me for some time to come. I thank you all very warmly for the delightfully comfortable Chesterfield; it is a most substantial ornament to our larger room, which we call the book-room. I hope when any of you are near us you will let us welcome you here; and you will realise, by resting on it, all the excellencies of this sofa. I was much surprised when I first heard of your thinking of giving me anything. Though I then put in a plea for one simple chair, you went on being too generous. So I can only gratefully accept, and assure you of my great pleasure in the gift and cordial remembrance of the kind givers. I am sure you will know that if I can at

any time help you as to pictures or Italian travel, I should be delighted to do so.—Believe me, Yours always sincerely,

JULIA FIRTH.

Fairhaven, Sollershott, Letchworth, Herts.

September 20th, 1908.

BUDGET GLEANINGS.

"I have just started sending flowers to a large girls' school in Liverpool. I undertake to send them at least once a fortnight. The first time I sent cowslips, and was told by the head-mistress that some did not know them! They painted them and sent me the paintings, which were really excellent. Last time one of the girls wrote, in the name of the school, to thank me—such a nice letter, and very pathetic. I believe many schools in the big towns are supplied with flowers by country 'friends.' If any country students care to take this up, I could find out schools in various towns and particulars of societies through which to send flowers.

"We have discovered a tree-creeper's nest fitted in between a tree trunk and some partly loose bark. It is only about seven or eight feet from the ground, so is easy to be seen. It is made of dry moss, bits of hay, and feathers, and at present there are four eggs. These are bluish-white, with brown or brownish-red spots arranged in a ring at the big end, with a few at the small end."

A lady staying at an hotel with her child and an ex-student was told by another lady staying there that she was sure her governess was an Ambleside student—she looked so like one!

Query.—What is the distinguishing feature of a student?

Answers will be gratefully received!

BOOKS.

"The Weavers." Gilbert Parker. A most interesting tale of Egypt.

"The Life and Times of Lady Jane Grey." Most interesting, and very clearly written.

"Altar Fires." A book that fascinates.

"Alice for Short"; "Somehow Good." De Morgan.

"Father and Son."

"Glimpses into Venetian History." Marian Crawford.

"English Children in the Olden Time." E. Godfrey.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LADYBIRD'S BUDGET.

Books recommended:—

"The Flight of Marie Antoinette."

"The Daughter of Louis XVI.," by Le Notre.

Rare flower found, *Sisyrinchium Angustifolium* at Whitchurch, near Cardiff, in May. Height, 9 or 10 inches, dull green grass-like leaves terminating in a solitary dark-blue star-like flower with yellow anthers (about $\frac{3}{8}$ inch across). The leaves of the grass did not swell out for the bloom like the Iris, but it appears to be of the Iris tribe.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ODDITY.

"C is a child with a sense of colour as regards to sound—she sees everything you say in colour. Long before she could read or write she could write a letter with the paintbrush in dabs of colour—and read it to herself when done." Such a process is mentioned in Galton's "Human Faculty" as a rare power of visualisation. Can anyone supply cases where the power exists in lesser or greater degree, and was Miss Dale consciously building upon this when she framed her scheme for teaching reading?

THE CONY BUDGET, 1901.

R. M. Williams is in Germany. Her address is Schmiede Strasse 14. Plagwitz, Leipzig.

Miss E. H. Laurence gives the title and details of a new periodical which began in April—*Country Queries and Notes*. It is fourpence monthly, and is full of all sorts of interesting information, and, I should think, would be an immense help to Nature students and teachers. It is under the same editor as *The Country-side*, a penny weekly which some of you may have seen. I will give you a few items from the current number: "Namesakes in Science," G. White and "White's Thrush"; "The Sky in June" (with star chart); "Nature in London"; "Book Reviews"; "British Butterflies" (one of a series); "From Overseas" (illustrated); "Nature Calendar for June"; "Nature Lessons in June."

I wonder whether anyone knows this queer little place—Bulmer? It is the southernmost village of Yorkshire, and within a few miles of Spurn Head. I have never seen the sea such a strange colour. It is a light chocolate brown. I suppose it is caused by the sand of which it is full, as the sand on the beach is very dark and rather reddish.

BOOKS.

"Picciola," par J. Saintine. The romance of a prisoner under Napoleon I.; the heroine a plant growing outside his cell.

"L'Isolée," René Bazin. A terrible story of one of the results of the crusade against the monastic system in France.